



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AIR POLLUTION ACTION DAY ALERT ISSUED FOR CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AREA FOR THURSDAY, JULY 2**

***Conditions Expected to Extend through Holiday Weekend and Coming Week***

CHICAGO, IL – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has issued an Air Pollution Action Day Alert for the Chicago Metropolitan area for Thursday, July 2 and is expecting multiple subsequent alerts due to an extended period of upcoming hot and dry weather conditions, which are conducive to ozone formation. Today's alert includes the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Grundy, Lake, McHenry and Will. Regional air quality is expected to reach the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" category on the national Air Quality Index (AQI) today and extend into the weekend. Three previous Action Days were issued on June 17-19, 2020. Additional Action Day Alerts are expected to be issued as these conditions continue through the Fourth of July weekend and possibly into next week.

An Air Pollution Action Day alert is issued when air quality is expected to be at or above the Orange/Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups category at multiple sites for multiple days according to the AQI. Ground-level ozone is forecasted to be elevated today and for the next several days, posing a potential health hazard to sensitive populations, including individuals with respiratory or pulmonary disorders, as well as active children and adults. Sensitive individuals should take special precautions and follow their physician prescribed regimen. All residents should keep cool and limit physical activity when air pollution levels are high.

Because air quality can change from day to day, the Illinois EPA provides daily air quality forecasts based on the AQI for fourteen sectors throughout Illinois. The AQI is a color-coded system that classifies air quality from Good to Hazardous. Air quality forecasts are available at [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov). Individuals can also subscribe to receive air quality forecasts for free via email or Twitter at <http://illinois.enviroflash.info>.

In addition to the Air Quality Alert, Illinois officials anticipate higher levels of particulate matter near and downwind of fireworks displays. Individuals susceptible to elevated fine particulates should take precautions to avoid exposure to fireworks emissions.

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Businesses and residents in the region are encouraged to take the listed steps below to reduce contributions to air pollution every day, but especially on Action Days.

- Limit Driving – combine errands, walk or bike if possible.
- If driving, avoid idling, consolidate errands and run them after 7 p.m. when sunlight is not as strong.
- Reduce energy demands:
  - Use energy efficient lighting.
  - Set your thermostat up at least 2 degrees and use a programmable thermostat.
  - Turn off and unplug electronics not in use.
- Use environmentally friendly household and cleaning products.
- Use a charcoal chimney or gas grill instead of lighter fluid when grilling.
- Avoid using gasoline-powered equipment like lawnmowers and leaf blowers on Air Pollution Action Days.
- Do not burn leaves or other yard waste.
- Notify colleagues, friends and family to help protect their health and encourage actions.

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